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ABSTRACT

DOCUMENT TRANSFER SYSTEMS

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A document transfer system enabling a consumer to obtain a document from an owner upon payment uses a cryptographic protocol involving the consumer, the owner, a document source, such as a printer, and a mediator, the protocol comprising the following steps:

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(a)   the consumer requests a document;

(b)   the owner provides the source with first and third portions of the key and provides the mediator with a fourth portion of the key, which can

15   combine with said first portion to generate the complete key;

(c)   the consumer provides the owner with the payment; and

(d)   the owner provides the source with a second portion of the key, which can combine with said first portion to generate the complete key.

20   A printer 1 for use in the above system comprises a document memory 2 for storing a received encrypted document, a key memory 3 for storing a first cryptographic key portion, a processor 4 for receiving a second cryptographic key portion and combining it with the first key portion to form a complete cryptographic key which is supplied to a decrypting module 5. The encrypted document is supplied to the

25   decrypting module 5 whereupon the document is decrypted and supplied to the consumer.